

BOOK REVIEW

SUSYN ANDREWS, ALAN LESLIE, and CRIMAN ALEXANDER. (eds). 1999. **Taxonomy of Cultivated Plants**. (ISBN 1 900347 89, hbk.). Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. £ 27, 553 Pp.

This volume contains the results of the 1998 "Third International Symposium on the Taxonomy of Cultivated Plants," sponsored jointly by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and the Royal Horticultural Society under the auspices of the International Society for Horticultural Science. The Symposium was organized by HORTAX (Horticultural Taxonomy Group) and held at the Pollock Halls of the University of Edinburgh from 20-26 July 1998.

The book is organized into introductory material, papers and shorter papers, but I found short papers or abstracts in each section. In the papers division, 43 works are distributed among ten conceptual sections, including: 1) Plant and germplasm collections, 2) Nomenclature in the ornamental seed trade, 3) Intellectual property rights and plants, 4) registration of plant names, 5) principles of cultivated plant classification, 6) the cultivar-definition and recognition, 7) databases for collections, nomenclature and taxonomy, 8) modern techniques in breeding and taxonomy, 9) case studies in the taxonomy of cultivated plants, and plant introductions. The next division covers short papers that were delivered as posters during the conference, and includes 50 abstracts divided among the following concepts: 1) investigations using molecular techniques, 2) databases and registers, 3) systematics, 4) classification and nomenclature, 5) conservation and collections, and finally, 6) publications.

This volume truly sums up the latest in horticultural taxonomy from a plethora of points of view, and gives the reader a precis of current concerns and vacuums in our understanding of cultivated plant systematics. It is impossible here to thoroughly review each subject presented, but such subjects as living collections' importance, germplasm collection, *ex* and *in-situ* conservation, role of herbaria, etc. are written to address the concerns of the practicing horticulturalist in the commercial world as much as the academic. The chapter on "the cultivar-definition and recognition" was particularly noteworthy and significantly enhanced my understanding of the challenges horticultural taxonomy faces. I am thoroughly convinced that the papers on fingerprinting of cultigens, concomitant with others that presented phylogenetic hypotheses for indigens and their cultigens, will be extremely valuable as lessons for us all, to help us tackle what has largely been a neglected area. Several of the molecular papers highlighted the fact that many cultigens may have their origin traced to but a few individuals, rather than representing an adequate sample of the infraspecific genetic diversity present in wild populations of the species. These papers can surely guide those who are attempting endangered species rescues, or introducing wild species into cultivation and have obvious conservation consequences.

I believe this book can open the traditionally trained systematist's eyes to the many problems facing horticultural taxonomy and should foster a greater appreciation for it. While the papers are brief summaries, their extensive references permit further study of each area, making the book an extremely useful tool. The book's physical features are like that of the other fine Kew publications, and the volume of information presented makes the book well worth the price. I unhesitatingly recommend it to anyone working in botanical gardens or universities, those who train future systematists, plant conservationists or horticulturalists.—*John J. Pipoly III; Head of Research, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan St., Ft. Worth, TX 76126-3019, USA.*